

USAID's Rule on Participation by Religious Organizations in USAID Programs

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) play an essential role in international humanitarian and development work, and have long been key partners with USAID. Expanding engagement with new and underutilized partners, which includes many FBOs, is an Agency priority under the New Partnerships Initiative. The Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives (CFOI) works to build bridges between USAID and faith-based and community organizations, lowering the barriers to entry for Agency resources. Its staff is available to provide assistance to both USAID staff as well as the potential new partners: contact cfoi@usaid.gov.

Key principles from the Rule on Participation by Religious Organizations in USAID Programs (22 CFR 205.1) include the following:



Level Playing Field

Religious organizations are eligible and should be encouraged to compete for funding for USAID programs on the same basis as any other organization. (This principle is also reflected in E.O. 13926 - Advancing International Religious Freedom).



Restriction on Funding Religious Activity

USAID funds may not be used to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization).



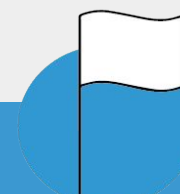
Nondiscrimination in Assistance

Organizations that receive funding from USAID (including through a prime award or sub-award) shall not, in providing services, discriminate against a program beneficiary, or potential program beneficiary, on the basis of religion or religious belief.



Unbiased Partnering

In the selection of service providers, neither USAID, nor entities that make and administer sub-awards of USAID funds, may discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation. All organizations should be encouraged to compete for awards/sub-awards regardless of the organization's religious character or affiliation.



Freedom to Maintain Character

Religious organizations that compete for and/or receive funding from USAID are free to maintain their independence and may continue to carry out their mission.



Non-coercion

USAID-funded assistance may not be conditioned on religious practice or participation. Explicitly religious activities must be provided separately in time or place from USAID-funded assistance, and participation must be voluntary.